

## NSF PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

Per the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) Modernization Act of 2010,<sup>1</sup> this chapter, together with the Overview, contains basic information about the National Science Foundation's (NSF's) mission and Strategic Plan, as well as NSF's fiscal year (FY) 2023 Annual Performance Plan and FY 2021 Annual Performance Report. Information about NSF's performance can also be found on the NSF website in the FY 2021 Performance and Financial Highlights Report.<sup>2</sup>

### FY 2022-2026 Strategic Plan Framework: Strategic Goals and Objectives

Alongside this FY 2023 Budget Request to Congress, NSF releases its new Strategic Plan for FYs 2022-2026: *Leading the World in Discovery and Innovation, STEM Talent Development, and the Delivery of Benefits from Research*. The four strategic goals in this plan are built upon four themes—Empower, Discover, Impact, and Excel—that form the core of the plan. These themes focus on expanding frontiers, engaging people, and delivering solutions. Under each goal are two Strategic Objectives, which together encompass all areas of agency activity. This goal structure enables NSF to link its investments to longer term outcomes.

FY 2022-2026 Strategic Framework, Strategic Goals, and Objectives

Strategic Goal	Strategic Objective
<b>1. Empower:</b> Empower STEM talent to fully participate in science and engineering	<b>1.1 Ensure accessibility and inclusivity</b> – Increase the involvement of communities underrepresented in STEM and enhance capacity throughout the nation.
	<b>1.2 Unleash STEM talent for America</b> – Grow a diverse STEM workforce to advance the progress of science and technology.
<b>2. Discover:</b> Create new knowledge about our universe, our world, and ourselves	<b>2.1 Advance the frontiers of research</b> – Accelerate discovery through strategic investments in ideas, people, and infrastructure
	<b>2.2 Enhance research capacity</b> – Advance the state of the art in research practice
<b>3. Impact</b> Benefit society by translating knowledge into solutions	<b>3.1 Deliver benefits from research</b> – Advance research and accelerate innovation that addresses societal challenges
	<b>3.2 Lead globally</b> – Cultivate a global science and engineering community based on shared values and strategic cooperation
<b>4. Excel:</b> Excel at NSF operations and management	<b>4.1 Strengthen at speed and scale</b> – Pursue innovative strategies to strengthen and expand the agency's capacity and capabilities
	<b>4.2 Invest in people</b> – Attract, empower, and retain a talented and diverse NSF workforce

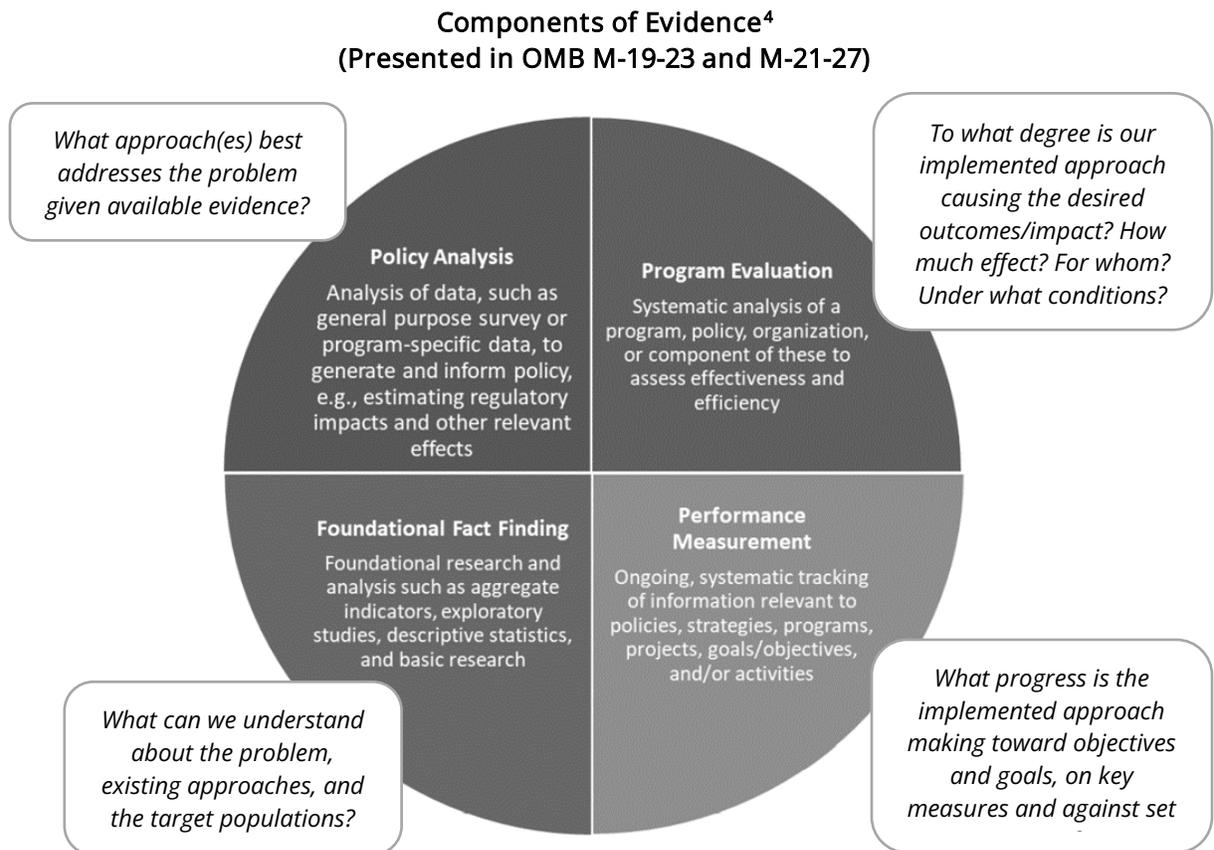
<sup>1</sup> The GPRA Modernization Act of 2010 is Public Law 111-352 and is available at: [www.congress.gov/111/plaws/publ352/PLAW-111publ352.pdf](http://www.congress.gov/111/plaws/publ352/PLAW-111publ352.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> FY 2021 Performance and Financial Highlights Report is available at [www.nsf.gov/about/performance/annual.jsp](http://www.nsf.gov/about/performance/annual.jsp)

## Integration of Performance and Evaluation

Throughout the development of this Strategic Plan, NSF has recognized that valuable synergies could be realized through greater integration of its assessment activities, such as its performance and evaluation assessment activities. NSF is now taking steps that build on the natural synergies in these areas and that capitalize on their relative strengths and complementary approaches. This is reflected in the FY 2022-2023 Annual Performance Plan, which outlines how NSF is expanding its view of performance to incorporate multiple types of evidence available at different timescales. Our approach leverages key aspects of the GPRA Modernization Act of 2010 (notably tools such as Agency Priority Goals and Strategic Reviews that enable agencies to think beyond annual output measures when designing performance targets) and the Evidence Act, which introduced a framework for types of evidence and placed performance monitoring as one of four components.

This framework incorporates the four evidence types described in OMB guidance on implementation of the Evidence Act.<sup>3</sup> This guidance defines four types of information used for Evidence Building: Foundational Fact Finding, Policy Analysis, Performance Measurement and Program Evaluation.



<sup>3</sup> OMB Memorandum M-21-27 “Evidence-Based Policymaking: Learning Agendas and Annual Evaluation Plans” may be accessed at [www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/M-21-27.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/M-21-27.pdf);

OMB Memorandum M-19-23 “Phase 1 Implementation of the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018: Learning Agendas, Personnel, and Planning Guidance” may be accessed at [www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/M-19-23.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/M-19-23.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> OMB Memorandum M-21-27, [www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/M-21-27.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/M-21-27.pdf)

The Annual Performance Plan presented in this chapter includes goals, indicators, and other information that relate directly to these four categories:

- Annual Goals are included in the “Performance Measurement” category of evidence and answer the question, “What progress is the implemented approach making toward objectives and goals, on key measures and against set targets?”
- Contextual Indicators are included in the “Foundational Fact Finding” category of evidence and answer the question, “What can we understand about the problem, existing approaches, and the target populations?”
- Evaluations are included in the “Program Evaluation” category of evidence and answer the questions, “To what degree is our implemented approach causing the desired outcomes/impact? How much effect? For whom? Under what conditions?”
- In the context of this Annual Performance Plan, Policy and Program Analysis reflect the “Policy Analysis” category of evidence, and answer the question, “What approach(es) best addresses the problem given available evidence?”

This multi-faceted framework will help to highlight how science and engineering research and education generate a dynamic set of impacts and benefits, and it will also provide valuable information and insights for strengthening NSF’s programs and investments.

